

CTA Response to the Recommendations of the California Performance Review

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ETV 01- Restructure the Role of the Secretary for Education – OPPOSE

CTA believes that by eliminating the Secretary for Education position and transferring responsibility for education policy to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the state can achieve efficiency and costs savings. California currently has a statewide elected constitutional officer who voters can hold accountable for the quality of K-12 public education. The appropriate changes are to align authority for educational policy development and implementation under the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who in turn is directly responsible to the voters of California. This proposal transfers power from our only non-partisan elected official and gives it to a political appointee.

ETV 05 Regionalize K-12 Educational Infrastructure – CONCERNS

CTA is committed to providing quality educational services to all students, including those students with special needs. CTA believes that educational services provided by County Offices of Education are an integral part of the educational program provided to many students, teachers and parents. Implementation of this recommendation transfers decision making from officials who are elected locally and creates a larger state bureaucracy that is farther from ordinary citizens and may produce many unintended consequences resulting in reduced quality of services to students and school districts. CTA believes local school districts and county offices must be able to make decisions that best fit the needs of their schools and communities.

In addition, recent legislation to settle the Williams v. California lawsuit gives county offices of education additional responsibilities to ensure that all students have access to adequate instructional materials, safe and functional facilities and appropriately credentialed teachers. In light of these requirements and duties added to county offices, it seems counterproductive to seek the consolidation of services into regions.

ETV 06 – Reduce Non-Instructional Costs in K-12 Schools – OPPOSE

Consistent with our position on legislation, CTA opposes this recommendation to repeal SB 1419, which enacted 10 safeguards to prevent school districts from outsourcing school services without ensuring that those contracts are competitive, employ qualified individuals and actual savings as a result of the outsourcing. We believe the current law allows sufficient flexibility for instances where the school staff lacks the expertise to do the work.

***ETV 11 – Change Enrollment Entry Date for Kindergartners to Enhance Their Success –
SUPPORT WITH RESERVATIONS***

CTA is generally supportive of the policy recommendation to change the kindergarten entry date to reflect the more rigorous academic content of today's kindergarten curriculum. However, we are extremely concerned with the proposal before the commission, which seeks to make this policy change in order to achieve state cost savings. As pointed out by the Legislative Analyst the immediate implementation would have a great impact on local school district budgets. School districts should be given the flexibility to phase in the change over a longer period. If students are to see their entrance into kindergarten delayed, they must gain access to quality preschool programs to ensure they receive the academic preparation to succeed when they enter kindergarten. Research shows that quality preschool is a cost effective investment of public resources. The dollars made available from delaying kindergarten entrance age should be used to fund the expansion of quality preschool programs.

***ETV 25 – Balance Career Technical Education and College Preparation in High Schools –
CONCERNS***

CTA believes that every student attending a public school in California is entitled to equal access to all educational opportunities. CTA also believes that students should have access to a quality comprehensive career-technical education should also be available to students. While we agree with the spirit behind ETV 25, we have concerns regarding the implementation. CTA supports expanded academic opportunities for students in career-technical education but we have concerns about intentional or unintentional misplacement of students into curriculum tracks based on their ethnicity, socio-economic status or native language. Currently, areas of concern arise around the over-representation of ethnic minority students in low ability courses and the under-representation of these students in college-prep and accelerated academic programs. As this recommendation evolves, it will be critical that this added curriculum expand student opportunities and not restrict them. Additionally, as noted in the Legislative Analyst Report on the CPR recommendations, implementation of this idea would not save the state money but instead cost \$300,000. As development of additional coursework would create a new mandate for school districts, new dollars are necessary to cover the associated costs. The LAO notes that the additional costs are proposed to be supported with Proposition 98 funds. Given that \$9.4 billion has been cut from Proposition 98 since 2001, it will be difficult if not impossible for Proposition 98 to absorb these costs without harming current programs.